

PRESS RELEASE

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**U.S. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CHIEF SALUTES AMERICA'S
INDEPENDENT INVENTORS**

Group Reminded to Guard Their Inventions Against Intellectual Property Theft

Alexandria, VA – U. S. Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property Jon Dudas today asked independent inventors to protect American ingenuity by safeguarding their inventions from intellectual property theft. Small businesses—such as independent inventors—are often at particular risk for IP theft, a growing problem around the world. Dudas urged attendees at the 10th annual Independent Inventor's Conference to make patent, trademark and copyright protection a core part of their business strategy.

“The strength of our nation's economy rests on the ingenuity of American inventors,” Dudas said. “In the 21st century, securing protection for your inventions is almost as important as the invention itself.”

“As inventors turn their ideas and discoveries into viable, marketable products, it is critically important for them to get the protection they need to safeguard their inventions and help protect our overall economy,” he continued.

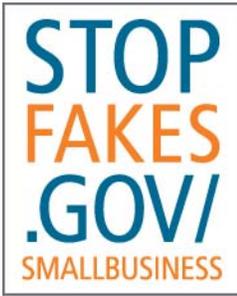
From Willis Carrier's air conditioning to Clarence Birdseye's frozen food technology, independent inventors have shaped the American economy throughout history. More than 200 independent inventors at the conference heard from Al Langer, the engineer on the medical team that invented the first automatic implantable cardioverter defibrillator, a life-saving device. Langer's device has revolutionized the way doctors treat heart patients, and his success as an inventor and entrepreneur provided valuable insights for conference attendees.

“Throughout history, inventors have helped people discover new worlds, build communities, and cure sickness and disease, said Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property Steve Pinkos.

“This conference celebrates all that inventors have accomplished in our nation's history, and will create in the future.”

The U.S. continues to be the driver of ingenuity around the world, evidenced by the surge in patent, trademark and copyright applications from inventors and the resulting patents issued by USPTO. In 2004, the USPTO received more than 376,000 applications for patents, and patent applications have more

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than doubled since 1992. In fact, the USPTO issued more patents in 2004 than it did during its first 40 years.

Dudas and Pinkos also used their remarks to talk to inventors about what the U.S. government is doing to combat intellectual property theft. While they pointed out that intellectual property theft poses a threat to all American businesses, both officials said that most small businesses and independent inventors are particularly at risk because they often lack the knowledge and expertise to effectively combat it. To address this, Dudas said that the USPTO is hosting the Independent Inventor's Conference—which is co-sponsored by the National Inventors' Hall of Fame—and a series of seminars across the country to help educate American inventors and small businesses about the realities of piracy and counterfeiting. During these events, intellectual property experts from the agency will provide attendees with details and useful tips about protecting and enforcing their intellectual property rights in the United States and around the world.

The USPTO is also currently conducting a nationwide awareness campaign that is providing information to small businesses about when to file for intellectual property protection, what type of protection to file for, where to file and how to go about it. The effort features outreach targeting industry sectors especially at risk of intellectual property theft, a Web site specifically designed to address the needs of small businesses, and informational materials informing small businesses about the problem and steps they can take to mitigate it. Materials and other information about the awareness campaign are available at www.stopfakes.gov/smallbusiness.

For more information about the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's effort to educate American small businesses about intellectual property rights, visit www.stopfake.gov/smallbusiness or www.uspto.gov.

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